



Idaho Standards for Infants, Toddlers, Children, and Youth Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

This document contains standards for parents, teachers, administrators, governing boards, support personnel, other interagency personnel, and interested community representatives to use in identifying, assessing, planning, and providing appropriate educational services to all children/students who are blind or visually impaired in Idaho. It is also intended to assist in monitoring programs for these students. Because educational services for these students are governed by mandates established in federal and state laws and regulations, the standards in this document were developed to be consistent with these mandates and articulate how the mandates should be implemented.



The Standards for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Section One: Identification and Referral

Outcome: Children with vision loss are identified and referred as early as possible to enable the best possible educational, social, emotional, and achievement outcomes.

Identification and Referral

Standard 1: Procedures exist for locating and referring infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness who may require early intervention and/or special education.

Resources

Standard 2: An unbiased, comprehensive resource information packet will be given to parents of recently identified children who are blind or visually impaired regardless of the child's age or other disabilities.

Collaboration

Standard 3: Programs for infants, toddlers, children, and youth, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, establish collaborative relationships with health care providers, social services, school districts, child care programs, and other appropriate agencies (e. g. deafblind project) in order to ensure that infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children with identified vision loss receive appropriate referral within two (2) days and are contacted by the appropriate agency within fourteen (14) calendar days.

Vision Screening

Standard 4: Qualified personnel conduct vision screenings to identify children who may have a vision loss.

Assessment Referral

Standard 5: Children who fail vision screenings receive appropriate assessment(s).

Additional Screening

Standard 6: Infants, toddlers, children, and youth, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, will be screened for hearing and/or additional impairment(s).

Section Two: Assessment of Child's/Student's Needs

Outcome: An individualized intervention or education plan is developed based on assessment that yields valid and reliable information about the child.

Persons Conducting the Assessment

Standard 7: Each assessment of infants, toddlers, children, and youth, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, birth – 21, is conducted by qualified personnel who understand the unique nature of vision loss and who are specifically trained to conduct these assessments.

Domains to be Assessed

Standard 8: Qualified professionals assess children/students and collaborate with parents and other professionals on all relevant areas of functioning to provide a comprehensive profile of the child/student with vision loss.

Administration of Assessments

Standard 9: Assessments are provided and administered using the student's primary language and in the appropriate medium/media by professionals proficient in that approach.

Specialized Services, Materials, and Equipment

Standard 10: The assessment report identifies the unique learning needs of the infant, toddler, child, or youth who is blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, related to the vision loss including needs for specialized services, materials and equipment, and accommodations in the unique developmental and learning environment.

Assessment in the State and District Core Curriculum

Standard 11: Infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, will be assessed using early intervention, state and district core curricula that are aligned with established state and district standards.

Assessment in the Expanded Core Curriculum

Standard 12: Infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, receive assessment in the expanded core curriculum by qualified personnel. A triennial comprehensive functional vision evaluation and learning media assessment will be conducted by qualified personnel.

Assessment Team

Standard 13: Infants, toddlers, children, and youth, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, are referred to a specialized assessment team approved by the State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired and developed by the local school district or provided by the state program when appropriate.

Eligibility Criteria

Standard 14: Eligibility criteria will be defined by the State of Idaho.

Service/Placement Considerations

Standard 15: A continuum of service/placement options is reviewed with parents and placement is determined by the IFSP/IEP team (including parents) based on valid and reliable assessment data and other information that identifies individual needs across developmental, academic, and social domains.

Appropriate Placement

Standard 16: Determination of appropriate early intervention or educational setting must be based on the identified needs of infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, throughout their developmental and educational experiences. Any appropriate placement option recommended by the IFSP/IEP team must be made available to the infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness.

Section Three: State Program Design

Outcome: Infants, toddlers, children, and youth, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness share the same learning opportunities as their sighted peers and benefit from programs that support and provide equal opportunities.

Policy on Literacy and Communication

Standard 17: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired has a written policy on the central role of literacy and communication as it relates to the cognitive, academic, social, and emotional development of infants, toddlers, children, and youth, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness.

Students with Additional Disabilities and Deafblindness

Standard 18: Provision is made for appropriate services for infants, toddlers, children, and youth, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness.

State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Standard 19: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired will have the oversight of the Idaho State Board of Education and the program administration will be advised and assisted by an advisory council appointed by the Idaho State Board of Education.

State Oversight

Standard 20: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired adopts policies that are consistent with the guidelines put forth in this document, delegates implementation of these policies to the administrative staff, and monitors results. These policies support the expected learning outcomes for children/students. These policies are initially reviewed annually for the first five (5) years and at least every five (5) years thereafter.

Continuum of Options

Standard 21: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides access to a full continuum of placement, program, service, and literacy options. The agency collaborates with the early intervention and local educational agencies, institutes of higher education, and other agencies to ensure that appropriate services for infants, toddlers, children, and youth, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness are provided.

Instructional Delivery System

Standard 22: The instructional delivery system supports infants, toddlers, children and youth, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, learning in a developmentally appropriate context and focuses on the unique learning needs and literacy medium/media in order to support success.

Program Administrator

Standard 23: The Program Administrator is an experienced educator of students who are blind or visually impaired, with skills to ensure that infants, toddlers, children and youth, who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, are provided with appropriate instruction and designated services. The Program Administrator has the skills necessary for facilitating participation of staff, parents, and the blind or visually impaired community in program development related to a continuum of services.

Staff Qualifications

Standard 24: Infants, toddlers, children and youth, who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, birth-21, are instructed by early intervention providers, teachers, and/or specialists who are specifically trained, certified, and/or licensed to teach academic, expanded core curriculum, communication, social, emotional, assistive technology, and transition skills to these individuals.

Paraprofessionals

Standard 25: State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired and local educational agencies will work collaboratively to train and support paraprofessionals who are providing services to infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness.

Professional Preparation

Standard 26: The Idaho State Board of Education will work toward ensuring that programs are provided through state public post-secondary institutions to prepare specifically trained, certified, and/or licensed early intervention providers, teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service professionals in the continuum of educational options for infants, toddlers, children and youth, who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness.

Caseload Management

Standard 27: Class size and/or caseloads of staff support the provision of specialized instruction and services based on the unique educational needs of infants, toddlers, children and youth, who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness.

Staff Development

Standard 28: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides ongoing training and mentoring for all staff to enhance achievement of infants, toddlers, children and youth, who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness. Teachers of the blind or visually impaired ensure that appropriate mentoring and professional development opportunities are available for teachers of the blind or visually impaired and certified orientation and mobility specialists.

Training for Education Personnel

Standard 29: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides training to education personnel serving its infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness regarding accommodations, modifications of the curriculum, and understanding the impact of vision loss on development and learning.

Facilities

Standard 30: Facilities are designed and maintained to enhance the provision of instruction and services to meet the unique academic, expanded core curriculum, communication, social, emotional, assistive technology, and transition needs of infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness.

Safe School Environment

Standard 31: The school environment will be a safe and secure setting in which all accommodations can be met.

Program Assessment

Standard 32: The school leadership, program administrators, and staff regularly assess infant's, toddler's, children's, and youth's progress toward accomplishing the expected federal, state, and school-wide learning results, and report program wide progress to the rest of the school community, including parents, and related agencies and organizations.

Program Accountability

Standard 33: As part of the state monitoring process, the program administration conducts a comprehensive assessment for the State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired using these standards for all areas of program quality, and provides written progress reports to parents, staff, the public, and interested parties.

Compliance

Standard 34: The State Board of Education will adopt an accountability system, including corrective action plans and sanctions for LEAs and other agencies that are out of compliance.

Section Four: Curriculum, Expanded Core Curriculum, and Instruction

Outcome: Infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, are provided with equal access to educational opportunities that meet their individual developmental, academic, and social needs.

Curriculum and Instruction—Birth to Three

Standard 35: Curriculum and instruction for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, are family focused and developmentally appropriate to ensure later academic, social, and vocational success.

Curriculum and Instruction—Three to Twenty One

Standard 36: School-aged children, who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, are provided with a challenging, coherent, and relevant core curriculum. The expanded core curriculum for students with visual impairments is necessary and should be provided to ensure an equal opportunity for learning in general education. Infants, toddlers, children and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities, receive instruction by qualified personnel in the expanded core curriculum as appropriate in the home, school, and community.

State and District Core Curriculum Standards

Standard 37: Children and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, will be instructed using the state and district core curriculum that are aligned with established state and district standards. Infants and toddlers will be instructed using early intervention, developmentally appropriate curriculum specially designed for the blind or visually impaired.

Expanded Core Curriculum

Standard 38: In addition to state and district core standards, infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, will be provided with the expanded core curriculum for the blind or visually impaired coordinated among service providers, which contains well-defined and relevant instruction in the areas of need as identified on the IFSP/IEP.

Multidisciplinary Team

Standard 39: All persons identified on the IFSP/IEP who provide services, including parents, will form a multidisciplinary team that works collaboratively and flexibly to meet the individual needs of infants, toddlers, children, and youth, recognizing the roles and responsibilities of each team member.

Curricular and Extracurricular Activities

Standard 40: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in collaboration with early intervention programs and local educational agencies, seeks to provide equal access to all infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, in curricular and extracurricular activities, and designated and related services in the home, school, and community. Educators and early interventionists ensure that children/students receive appropriate opportunities to participate with peers who are blind or visually impaired as well as those who are sighted.

Natural Environment

Standard 41: The infant/toddler who is blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, is provided services in the child's natural environment(s) in accordance with the child's IFSP.

Focus on Authentic Peer Interactions

Standard 42: The infant, toddler, child, or youth who is blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, has authentic peer interactions and is able to participate in social and academic activities. Educators will teach the child/student social skills to facilitate independence, self-advocacy, and interaction with peers, through direct instruction, modeling, and peer coaching.

Student Achievement Standards

Standard 43: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired will facilitate the development of student achievement standards and expanded core curriculum standards that will be reviewed and revised at least every five (5) years.

Equal Access

Standard 44: Educators must provide equal access to materials and resources to ensure equal education opportunities for infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, in a timely manner.

Transitions

Standard 45: Transitions occur periodically throughout a blind or visually impaired infant's, toddler's, child's, or youth's education: early intervention to school services, preschool to elementary school, elementary school to middle school/high school, and high school to vocational, independent living, and/or post-secondary education. Planning and implementing support services must occur and be documented in a timely manner prior to each transition.

Assistive Technology

Standards 46: Early interventionists and educators must ensure the availability and use of assistive technology for infants, toddlers, children, and youth who are blind or visually

impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness. Trained and qualified personnel will provide training and support to personnel and children/students.

Assessment of Instructional Design

Standard 47: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired uses appropriate assessment to measure the achievement of each individual infants, toddlers, children, or youth to determine the efficacy of instructional design.

Section Five: Parent Training and Family and Community Involvement

Outcome: Family and community members are active, informed, and involved participants in the education process of children and youth who are blind or visually impaired.

Parent Training and Support

Standard 48: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired, local educational agencies, and/or other agencies provide orientation and a continuum of training opportunities for parents to acquire the necessary skills/information to support the implementation of their infant's, toddler's, child's, or youth's developmental, educational, vocational, and social achievement.

Community Involvement

Standard 49: The State Educational Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired has an ongoing process for involving parents and the blind or visually impaired community in program development and encourages strong collaboration between school staff, parents, members of the blind or visually impaired community, and the business community. The program leadership employs a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the program's established support system for students.